EVOLUTION OF THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF GANDHI

Buddhadeva Bhattacharyya

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With a Foreword by
NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

Calcutta Book House
CALCUTTA 12

2 OCTOBER 1969

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Printed at Mudran Bharati
Calcutta 9 and published by
P. C. Bhowal Calcutta Book
House Calcutta 12

Publisher's Note

In this the centenary year of Gandhiji's birth, celebrations and observances of the event have been taking place in almost every country of the world. The countless celebrations which are being organized are sure to take diverse forms, shapes and characters, publication of books being not excluded. These celebrations will be the homage of India and the world to the Man who became an epoh.

A publishing house like ours, while considering it to be one of its obligations to take its share in these celebrations, cannot and does not observe it as a ritual, but considers it to be a duty and a privilege for it to disseminate the ideas of Gandhi whom a grateful nation called Mahatma in deep love and regard.

It is from this sense of engagement and involvement that we take pleasure, and deem it a proud privilege, to present to our readers this volume.

Foreword

New Delhi 22, August 14 : 1969

Dr. Buddhadeva Bhattacharyya is well read in Marxism. He has spent a considerable time in a critical study of Gandhiji's social, economic and political ideas, as well as of the philosophical background of these aspects of his thinking. His book is impressive in scholarship and creates a very favourable impression about his critical abilities as a scholar.

At some points I have found myself in disagreement with him. My feeling has been that he has emphasized Gandhiji's role as an individual social reformer to a greater extent than justified. Consequently he has slightly underrated Gandhiji's technique of mass-action in which he worked with common people, and organized them for non-violent resistance.

But differences of valuation of this nature will always be present in the writings of one scholar and another. The merit of a book is not reduced thereby.

I would strongly recommend that the book should be read by all those who are interested in the political, social and economic ideas of Mahatma Gandhi, as it furnishes an objective assessment of Gandhism from the Marxian standpoint.

Nirmal Kumar Bose

Preface

The work originally a dissertation awarded the degree of D. Litt. by the University of Calcutta in 1966 is now being published with slight modifications and additions.

It may seem somewhat puzzling to many, irrespective of their ideological moorings and political affiliations, that a committed Marxist has preferred to choose the theme of Gandhi as his field of inquiry. As a matter of fact I have faced this question oftentimes from Marxist and Gandhian quarters alike. So I owe a word of explanation here which I pose below as briefly as possible.

First, Gandhiji introduced 'serious politics' in this country and transformed the national movement, till then confined to the western-oriented urban upper social strata and middle classes, to an authentic broad-based mass movement. He evolved a technique of direct mass action which placed unhesitating reliance on the creative political role of the masses and on their independent initiative for action. This has an especial significance for a student of contemporary affairs, and for that matter to a Marxist too to whom 'serious politics' means active participation of the masses in politics. Secondly, it has seemed to me that the Official Marxist formulations made from time to time about Gandhiji did not reflect a true Marxian understanding of the historic role of the tallest leader of our nation and of the ideas he cherished. These OM formulations suffered

from subjective orientation, and an emotion-charged oversimplification seemed to have guided their judgements. And not very infrequently, besides, official 'lines' on Gandhi and Gandhism took sharp turns. These switch-overs from one extreme to another were dictated, I am afraid, not by fresh intellectual inquiries, but by extra-intellectual factors. To be brief : I failed to persuade myself to subscribe to these non-objective assessments. I do strongly feel that one can admire Gandhiji without being converted to his line of thinking or being convinced of the validity of his theories. And that is why I felt the necessity of understanding and evaluting Gandhiji's ideas from an objective and a critical point of view. I take this opportunity to record here that it was Mr. Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri MP, an eminent Marxist scholar, who had first suggested to me to undertake a critical study of Gandhiji's thought.

It is common knowledge that Gandhiji was no academician and one hardly finds system in his thought. Scholars such as the late Dr. GopiNath Dhawan and others have tried to present Gandhiji's social, economic and political ideas in a systematized form. But, then, Gandhiji's ideas were not static. A continuously evolving personality Gandhiji was, and his ideas, being grounded on certain basic principles, were always in a process of evolution. And the evolution of his ideas certainly required further researches, and this is only an humble attempt to trace the development of his ideas.

I am conscious of the fact that ideas cannot be understood in isolation from practice ; this is more true in the case of what is popularly called Gandhism. The conscious intuitions bear relevance only in terms of their concrete, objective manifestations in practice. But, however important the necessity of a comprehensive analysis of Gandhian theory and practice in its totality, the practice of Gandhism could not be dwelt upon here due to obvious reasons. The role of Gandhiji

in Indian politics will be dealt with in a separate volume.

I shall feel amply rewarded if the present work stimulates further researches and more comprehensive and more scientific analyses of Gandhian thought. It will be my greatest satisfaction if this work raises controversies and provokes healthy discussion on the subject.

It is my pleasantest duty to express my sincerest feelings of gratitude to my teacher, Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose who was kind enough to make available to me the files of *Young India* and *Harijan* and devote some of his precious hours to go through the entire MS. I am indebted to Professor Bose for yet another piece of kindness. He has been good enough to write the Foreword to this volume. I owe a great deal of debt to Dr. Niharranjan Ray, Professor and Director, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, Mr. Manindra Chakraborty and a host of friends without whose affectionate encouragement this work would not have been completed. I am grateful to Mr. Abinash Chandra Dasgupta. An able research worker himself, he took it as a labour of love to check up some hundreds of references contained in this book. I am also indebted to Mr. Arabinda Chakrabarty who provided editorial assistance in the production of this volume. The index I owe to the kindness of Mr. Subodh Banerji. Mr. Buddhadev Bhattacharyya deserves thanks for the technical advice regarding the lay-out and production of this book. I wish to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the Librarians and the courteous staff of the National Library, Calcutta and the Gandhi Vichar Parishad (now Gandhi Peace Foundation) library for having made available to me many of the books referred to in this work. Mr. Panchanan Bose and Mr. Prabhat Mitra were good enough to make available to me the files of *Young India* and *Harijan* for which I owe them a debt. I am grateful to Mr. Adhir Chandra Banerji

who placed at my disposal the services of a typist. He also helped me in many direct and indirect ways. To be a little bit personal : I express my deep feelings of gratitude to my sister-in-law Mrs. Rani Bhattacharyya but for whose unbounded affectionate encouragement it would not have been possible for me to stand the stresses and strains of research work stretching over a period of years. : And—I feel myself extremely unfortunate that I miss Dilip, Ajit and Manis this day.

I am thankful to Mr. P. C. Bhowal, Proprietor, Calcutta Book House, whose zeal and enterprise made possible the publication of this volume.

Especial mention must be made of the courtesy of Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad, for their kind permission to quote Gandhi's writings *in extenso*. I acknowledge that their other publications also have helped me immensely in my work. I thank them once again.

I would also like to place on record my indebtedness to scholars from whose books I have cited relevant passages. I have drawn heavily upon P. Spratt's *Gandhism : An Analysis*, Joan V. Bondurant's *Conquest of Violence*, Paul F. Power's *Gandhi on World Affairs*, Krishnalal Sridharani's *War Without Violence*, Nirmal Kumar Bose's *Studies in Gandhism*, Dhirendra Mohan Datta's *Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*, Benoy Gopal Ray's *Gandhian Ethics*, Vishwanath Prasad Varma's *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sarvodaya*, D. P. Mukerji's *Diversities*, Susil Kumar Maitra's *Hindu Ethics*, A. J. Toynbee's *A Study of History* (vols. III, V, VIII, XII), etc. To them and all others scholars who have thrown light on different aspects on Gandhiji's ideas I owe very much which I gratefully acknowledge. Needless to mention, any student of Gandhi and Gandhism shall have to constantly refer to D. G. Tendulkar's *Mahatma : Life of Mohandas Karamchad Gandhi* (8 volumes) and Pyarelal's *Mahatma Gandhi : The Last Phase* (2 volumes) for a chronological study of the development of the personality of

Gandhiji and the ideas that he propounded. And this I had to do, I acknowledge. The Editor of *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* has done a magnificent job but for whose stupendous undertaking students of Gandhism like myself would not have been able to acquaint themselves with Gandhiji's writings, those of South Africa days in particular. I sincerely acknowledge my debt to the Editor of *The Collected Works.*

One more word. The opinions expressed in this book reflect my personal views and the responsibility for interpretation is mine alone.

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30 *September* 1969

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"... one would risk an error in attempting to judge him [Gandhi] by what he said ten years ago because his thought is in constant revolution."——ROMAIN ROLLAND

1. Introduction

GANDHI has become a part of our national being. We respond to his name, achievements and memory rather emotionally. It may be explained in terms of his too closeness to us, both in respect of time and space. Too much of proximity usually stands in the way of an objective appreciation which demands an intellectual-analytical approach. Emotion is not intelligence. Enthusiasm is not understanding. Emotion is helpful and good in its own sphere. But when it overpowers our intellect we lose our perspective and fall victims to a sort of optical illusion. We get ourselves bogged in utter confusion. Emotion divorced from and unrestrained by intellect degenerates and issues in blind adoration, dogmatism and fanaticism.* *Bhakti* is not a sure guide to comprehension, it is *vicāra* that helps us to understand and comprehend. One may recall here the wise words of the *Yoga-vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* :

> "This human life is for the attainment of knowledge. And if a man always analyses the root cause of everything (*vicāra*), his sorrows will become less and less. Remember this and with determination always analyse the root of everything. Never neglect the intellectual approach (*vicāra*), never minimise its value." (*Mumukṣu-Vyavahāra-prakaraṇa*, 12/12).
>
> "This constant aid in the shape of *vicāra* is an unequalled remedy for the sorrows of life." (Ibid., 14/2).
>
> "Rama ! it is better to be a worm inhabiting a dung-heap, or a serpent confined to the mountain cave,

* Gandhi wrote : "Blind adoration, in the age of action, is perfectly valueless, is often embarrassing and equally often painful."—*Young India*. 12-6-24, p. 197.

than to lose one's analytical insight in life. Its loss is the root of all unhappiness. The sages have deprecated its loss, and you should never lose your *vicāra* in life." (Ibid., 14/46-7).

"For one who is fallen into the dark abyss of ignorance, there is no means of rescue except *vicāra*, the analytical-intellectual approach." (Ibid., 14/48).[1]

The utter cynical and contemptuous disregard for Gandhi and his philosophy, on the other hand, is equally emotional. The fount is the same. It is not intellect but emotion that rules such a judgment or rather the lack of it. Both the extreme points of view—gushing adoration and angry condemnation—though apparently opposed to each other have a common bond of kinship in their allegiance to emotion as the determinant in their evaluation. Anti-intellectual approach unites the two extremes. But judgment presupposes analysis, i.e., *vicāra* or an intellectual approach. The plea for an intellectual approach to understand Gandhi and his philosophy might evoke sceptical derision. But to move away from the line of this approach would be inexcusable. The job is indeed difficult, but it is nevertheless rewarding.

Gandhi has been universally acclaimed as a great man. No account can be adequate of the greatness of a great man. But it is in the nature of man to measure and evaluate. Paying homage to the great man is one thing; assessing his greatness is another. Admiration of the great man is doubly admirable if that follows an objective appraisal.

What does greatness mean in history? What is the role of the great man? The concept *great* is a relative concept. In the ethical sense every man is great who, to use the Biblical phrase, "lays down his life for his friend."[2] But to be more precise. The great man is an individual, and, being an outstanding individual, the famous British historian E. H. Carr reminds us, is also a social phenomenon of outstanding importance.[3] The greatness of the great man cannot be abstracted from society and history. But one need not, we think, as Tolstoy did, decry great men as no more than 'labels giving names to events'. At the same time we do not

subscribe to the view which places great men outside history and sees them as imposing themselves on history in virtue of their greatness, as "Jack-in-the-boxes who emerge miraculously from the unknown to interrupt the real continuity of history".[4] Hegel's classic description of the great man sums up the true significance of greatness. To quote him :

> "The great man of the age is the one who can put into words the will of his age, tell his age what its will is and accomplish it. What he does is the heart and essence of his age ; he actualizes his age."[5]

Every social epoch, Marx wrote while endorsing Helvetius, needs its great men, and when it does not find them it invents them.[6] George Plekhanov in his *The Role of the Individual in History* developed the Marxian idea and ably demonstrated that great men while being products of history also act as the agents of history.* The very meaning of "greatness", more particularly in social and political matters ** is not something fixed but is historically conditioned. As has been said : "Each society not only has its own economic organization, its own law of population and its own art-styles ; it has its own criterion of greatness. ...In politics and religion the 'great man' is the man who can get himself believed in. To get people to believe in him, he must in some way gratify or fulfil their need."[7]

Our reference to greatness as being historically conditioned should not be construed as to mean that we believe in History with a capital H. We have no faith in Divine Providence, World Spirit, Manifest Destiny, History with a capital H, or any other of the abstractions which have

* See Ch. V for Plekhanov's elaboration of the Marxian view on this point.

** Dr. Leavis means something like the Hegelian description of greatness when he says that great writers are "significant in terms of the human awareness they promote."—F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1950, p. 2.

Speaking of the role of the great men in science, Prof. J. D. Bernal says : "The hold of the 'great men' myth on the history of science has indeed lasted far longer than in social and political history. ...Now great men have had decisive effects on the progress of science, but their achievement cannot be studied in isolation from social environment. ...The fact that they are men of their time, subject to the same formative influences and suffering the same social compulsions as other men, only enhances their importance."—*Science in History*, Watts, London, 1957, pp 21-22.

sometimes been supposed to guide the course of events. We share the view of Marx : "*History* does nothing, it possesses no immense wealth, fights no battles. It is rather *man*, real living *man* who does everything, who possesses and fights."[8] It is the conscious intervention of thousands and millions of men that re-orients the course of history. Man makes himself and creates history.

An outstanding individual lays his claim to greatness when he, as the child of his age, becomes at once the creator of social forces which change the shape of the world and the thoughts of men. It is the great man who unleashes the latent historical forces—the impact of which is tremendous, nay inconceivable. As one reviewer of history has correctly stated : "Historical forces can be more explosive than atom bombs."[9]

The people of India believed in Gandhi. He could get himself believed in for he fulfilled their historical need. The great Gandhi could realize the historical necessity of the hour and actualized the need of the age. It was he alone who could respond to the challenge of the given historical period. It was he who released the latent energy of the millions of people—the creative force of history. That made him one of the greatest leaders of mankind and undoubtedly, the greatest of our country. It has sometimes been suggested that he was more of a prophet of spirit and "the prophets of spirit make history just by standing outside history"[10], or that Gandhi "had his roots outside time, and drew strength thence."[11] We fail to persuade ourselves to subscribe to this view. No great man can stand outside history. The fact that he is rooted in history only enhances his greatness. This was particularly true of Gandhi. We do not dispute that Gandhi was a spiritual man, a *Mahātmā* or Great Soul.[12] But Gandhi would not have been the same Gandhi he were only a spiritual man. Carl Heath correctly notes : "If he is a Mahatma or Great Soul, he is also a man of the people amongst the people."[13] He was a prophet indeed, but a prophet of a new type—a prophet of national, economic and social emancipation. The people need prophets.

They are needed in the normal functioning of a democratic society. They are needed especially in the periods of crisis and basic renewal of society. The primary work of the prophet or the inspired servant of the people, as Jacques Maritain, the Catholic philosopher, reminds us, "is to *awaken* the people, to awaken them to something better than everyone's daily business to the sense of a supra-individual task to be performed."[14] Gandhi fulfilled this criterion of a prophet and he could only do that as he felt instinctively, so to say, the needs of the hour. The elemental insight that he possessed enabled him to feel that way.

Romain Rolland had said of him : "For if there is such a thing as genius, great by its own strength whether or not it corresponds to the ideals of its surroundings, there can be no genius of action, no leader, who does not incarnate the instincts of his race, satisfy the need of the hour, and requiet the yearning of the world. Mahatma Gandhi does all this."[15] It was because Gandhi could realize the historical necessity and evolve a technique which could rouse the masses into action that he earned the supreme leadership of the nation. The message that he gave or the philosophy that he preached and practised reflects in a measure the social reality of the period—his ideas seized the time—and at the same time embodies the impulse and contains the urge for transcending the given reality. Every great man, though being historically conditioned, always give a new lift to history. Gandhi was one of those great men who while being bound by history gave a new direction to the course of history. Therein lies his true significance. Gandhi and his philosophy should have to be viewed from that perspective.

A few more brief introductory remarks remain to be made before we set to our discussion. Gandhi did not systematize his thought. It was not in his nature, too. He did not assign himself the task of setting up an intellectual and academic discipline. He was not a theorist ; he was primarily an actionist or a *Karma-Yogī*. "I am not built for academic writings.

Action is my domain."[16] For him, the means to knowledge was not contemplation but action. As he himself had said : "There is no such thing as 'Gandhism', and I do not want to leave any sect after me. I do not claim to have originated any new principle or doctrine. I have simply tried in my own way to apply the eternal truths to our daily life and problems....Well, all my philosophy, if it may be called by that pretentious name, is contained in what I have said. You will not call it 'Gandhism' ; there is no 'ism' about it."[17] This natural disinclination or aversion for founding any 'ism' and sect helped him to grow into a continuously evolving personality.

Gandhi did not consider political philosophy as a distinct, autonomous intellectual system separated from ethics, economics, sociology, etc. He viewed life in its totality. He looked at life *en face*, not in profile. For Gandhi, therefore, there was no line of demarcation between economics and ethics, ethics and politics, politics and economics, etc. This might have been due to the influence of the Indian philosophical tradition. Every problem is discussed by the Indian philosopher from all possible approaches—metaphysical, ethical, logical, etc. This tendency has been called by some thinkers, like Acharya Brajendra Nath Seal, the synthetic outlook of Indian philosophy.[18]

Any study of political philosophy should start with defining its scope. The first task would be to sort out the elements that constitute political philosophy. Prof. C. Wright Mills suggested that :

First of all, a political philosophy is itself a social reality : it is an *ideology* in terms of which certain institutions and practices are justified and others attacked ; it provides the phrases in which demands are raised, criticisms made, exhortations delivered, proclamations formulated, and at times, policies determined.

Second, it is an ethic, an articulation of *ideals* which on various levels of generality and sophistication is used in judging men, events and movements, and as goals and guidelines for aspirations and policies.

Third, a political philosophy designates *agencies* of action, of the means of reform, revolution or conservation. It contains strategies and programmes that embody both ends and means. It designates, in short, the historical levers by which ideals are to be won or maintained after they have been won.

Fourth, it contains *theories* of man, society and history, or at least assumptions about how society is made up and how it works ; about what are held to be its most important elements and how these elements are typically related ; its major points of conflict and how these conflicts are resolved. It suggests the methods of study appropriate to its theories. From these theories and with those methods, expectations are derived.

To examine any political philosophy, then, we must examine it as an ideology, a statement of ideals, a designation of agency or agencies, and as a set of social theories.[19]

Gandhi's political philosophy contains in a way this assortment of elements. Any study undertaken for the purpose of systematizing and giving a theoretical construction to his speeches and writings shall at the outset have to find out the nature of his political philosophy. The rough-hewn social and political theory that he evolved can be traced back to his basic humanistic outlook. He talked often in terms of god, spirit, soul, etc., but in its inspiration the secular consideration played the key role. Though there was for him no antithesis between spiritual and worldly matters, he had certain fundamental beliefs from which he never budged an inch.* The basic moorings of his overall world outlook is, of course, to be found in philosophical idealism. But in social and political matters he did not start from *a priori* considerations, rather he looked at the world empirically. An experimenter with Truth that he was, it was but logical on his part to develop this empiric attitude regarding practical affairs. It is plausible that this was due to the influence of his contact with the Englishmen during his student days and afterwards. For, to be sure, empirical outlook

*"There are eternal principles which admit of no compromise, and one must be prepared to lay down one's life in the practice of them."—*Harijan*, 5-9-36, p. 238.

is said to be one of the characteristic features of the Englishmen. But we are not quite certain as to whether Gandhi consciously derived this trait straight from the English source. But that does not invalidate our hypothesis. The lack of an adequate intellectual system is in a certain sense a defect. But at least from the point of view of immediate effectiveness, this deficiency was evidently an advantage for him. His greatest merit as a thinker, says Spratt, was his eclecticism.[20] Gandhi concerned himself mainly with prescribing practical cures for the evils of the world and as such he had necessarily to be pragmatic in his approach. Belonging to the most modern type of mass leader* Gandhi had to move millions of men. A practical idealist which he was, he undertook for himself the responsibility of translating his life-philosophy into action. As a practical man, he was concerned with taking care of the present.[21] One step was enough for him. As he wrote : "I know only the moment's duty."[22] This pragmatic approach characterizes his political philosophy.** But some commentators of Gandhi's philosophy, who find in him a spiritual leader above everything else and who ignore the historical significance of Gandhi, do not share this view. But any analysis which takes into account the role of Gandhi in its totality can never brush aside his incomparable political realistic acumen. This sense of native realism was reflected in his pragmatic approach. He had no inclination for determining the distant goal by definitions in advance ; rather his prime concern was centred upon action in the immediate present. As he himself wrote : "I have purposely refrained from dealing with the nature of Government in a society based on non-violence...when society is deliberately constructed in accordance

* "On the one hand, Gandhi incarnates India's traditional ideal of a saint, but on the other hand, he belongs to the most modern type of mass-leader."—Count Hermann Keyserling, 'Gandhi's Place In World History' in *Mahatma Gandhi : Essays and Reflections on His Life and Work*, ed. S. Radhakrishnan, Jaico Publishing House, Bombay Calcutta etc., 1956, p. 156.

** cf. "The Hindus were the first pragmatists ; we at the other end of the world have at last rounded to their original insight, though only in respect of everyday things."—Wilmon Henry Sheldon, 'Contrast between East and West' in *Essays in East-West Philosophy*, ed. Charles A. Moore, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1951, p. 294.

with the law of non-violence, its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is today. But I cannot say in advance what the Government based wholly on non-violence will be like."[23] The compulsion of practical politics makes a mass leader pragmatic. For a mass leader has to move about in the essentially pragmatic world. Gandhi's credit was that his pragmatism did not degenerate into opportunism, as has been usually the case with other lesser men. He was not that much of a pragmatist to deviate from his basic principles of Truth and Non-violence.

The essential characteristic of Gandhi's personality and of his life was its continuous growth and evolution. He always felt that he was experimenting with Truth. The title of his autobiography is significant. Louis Fischer says of Gandhi : "He allowed truth to lead him without a map. If it took him to an area where he had to discard some intellectual baggage or walk alone without past associates, he went. He never impeded his mind with STOP signs."[24] J. B. Kripalani correctly notes that usually Gandhi tried to solve problems as they arose, in consonance with his basic principles of morality, the genius of his people, their historical background and the existing circumstances of the country.[25] His political philosophy, being grounded on certain basic principles, evolved and grew out of practice. This growth and evolution of his dynamic personality has often been misunderstood. It has been alleged that he was inconsistent. True, he did not appear to be consistent. He wrote :

"I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my pursuit after Truth I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that my growth will stop with the dissolution of the flesh."[26]

"I have never made a fetish of consistency. I am a votary of Truth and I must say what I feel and think at a given moment on the question, without regard to what I may have said before on it ...As my vision gets clearer, my views must grow clearer with daily practice. Where I have deliberately

altered an opinion, the change should be obvious. Only a careful eye would notice a gradual and imperceptible evolution."[27]

Speaking of his growing experience he wrote :

"At the time of writing I never think of what I have said before. My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may present itself to me at a given moment. The result has been that I have grown from truth to truth ; I have saved my memory an undue strain ; and what is more, whenever I have been obliged to compare my writing even of fifty years ago with the latest, I have discovered no inconsistency between the two. But friends who observe inconsistency will do well to take the meaning that my latest writing may yield unless, of course, they prefer the old. But before making the choice they should try to see if there is not an underlying and abiding consistency between the two seeming inconsistencies."[28]

Gandhi explained why he had to change his views. He modified his views according as the circumstances demanded. To quote him :

"People say that I have changed my view, that I say today something different from what I said years ago. The fact of the matter is that conditions have changed. I am the same. My words and deeds are dictated by prevailing conditions. There has been a gradual evolution in my environment and I react to it as a *satyagrahi*."[29]

This evolutionary character is most manifest in *satyāgraha* which Gandhi called "a science in the making".[30]

This study makes no pretension to being a comprehensive review of the evolution of the unique personality of Gandhi or of his leadership pattern ; it does not deal with all aspects of the Gandhian theory and technique of action. We do not propose to evaluate his role in Indian politics. It may be found necessary to refer to some of the political events only to place his ideas in their background. This study will primarily concern itself with tracing the evolution of his theoretical concepts. The limitation is obvious. But howsoever limited may the

scope of the present study be, it will fail in its task if it does not take into account the life-philosophy of Gandhi. This awareness impels us to discuss, though not in much detail, his metaphysical outlook, ethical principles, sociological views, concept of human nature, philosophy of history, the basic theoretical precepts of the technique of *satyāgraha*, economic thought, etc. It is only in the background of these concepts that his political theory can be properly approached and appreciated.

The social and political philosophy of Gandhi passed through two broad phases of development, one extending roughly over 1904 to 1920 and another covering the subsequent period. But this is just a broad division ; it should not be taken too rigidly.

As has been suggested by Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose in his *Studies in Gandhism*[31], we have tried to arrange as far as practicable Gandhi's utterances and writings in chronological order, the purpose being to understand each of them in relation to the circumstances under which it was said or written. This we have felt to be the only way of viewing the evolution of Gandhi's political and social philosophy in its proper context. This method enables one to find out how his ideas and opinions had changed in course of time, if and when they had changed at all. It would be well to recognise the fact that the process of evolution that Gandhi underwent was in conformity with his growing experience as well as the changes in objective reality. The evolution of the political philosophy of Gandhi can only be appreciated if we attempt to view this development both from within and from without. His political philosophy, therefore, has to be understood in the background of his mental development as well as in the context of the objective situation. One must view the process with the aid of a psychograph as well as a sociograph.

By the term psychograph is meant a statement of the inner processes of thinking, evaluation and acting ; while the term sociograph stands for the matrix of the social situation which defines the possibilities and limits of one's actions.[32] The relation that exists between mind and external circumstances

is that of interaction. Ideas once formed exert tremendous force on the externals. One should not neglect the process of ideation. It would be a false pretence of objectivity if one neglects the inner view of things. The general statement is more particularly true in the case of Gandhi who laid much store on the creative function of the mind. As we pursue our study, we may sometimes even find that only the connotation of certain terms changed for him, while his fundamental opinions remained unaltered in their essence.

One more word. Gandhi's political philosophy, like any other political philosophy, at once provides specific answers for specific situations and contains general principles of an enduring nature. One must try to be careful enough to distinguish between these elements so that there be no distortion in a balanced evaluation of their relative importance.

We have drawn heavily upon Gandhi's writings for we feel that understanding becomes easier if one cares to refer to his utterances and writings in original. Moreover there is a pronounced tendency to cull out some isolated passages—there is enough scope for it—in support of one's own view of Gandhi. The motive has not always been free from bias or prejudice. We have tried, though we are not sure of our success, to avoid the easy temptation of arbitrarily selecting some passages to fit in Gandhi with an image after our own heart. But this should not be construed as to mean that we have suspended our evaluation of his ideas in course of our analysis. Analytical-intellectual approach does not rule out but, quite the contrary, demands such an evaluation.

We have also taken into account the interpretations that have been given at various periods by different scholars and commentators. As the following pages will demonstrate, we have sometimes too readily agreed and sometimes sharply differed with these reviewers. But all the same we have recognized the justification for referring to these sources in order to make this study free from subjective bias.